

Iran Comes 3rd in Kabaddi World Cup

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iranian national Kabaddi team defeated England in the 2014 Kabaddi World Cup bronze medal match.

On Friday, the Iranian outfit de-

feated England 48-31 at the Baba Kala Mehar Stadium in Punjab, India.

The Iranian team had already defeated US (40-39), Australia

(59-29), Spain (54-27) and lost to India (53-39) and Pakistan (88-56).

Host India will face Pakistan in the final match on Friday.



Iran kabaddi federation logo

Williams And Djokovic Top World Tennis Awards

PARIS (AFP) - Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams were named men's and women's World Champions for 2014 on Thursday by the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

It is the fourth time that Djokovic has taken the top award after he won Wimbledon, the ATP World Tour finals and finished the year ranked number one in the world by the ATP.

The 27-year-old Serb is one of only four men to be named ITF World Champion four or more times, alongside Ivan Lendl, Pete Sampras and Roger Federer.

Williams won the US Open, the 18th Grand Slam title of her career, the ATP Tour Championship and was also ranked number one



Novak Djokovic of Serbia holds up the trophy after defeating Roger Federer of Switzerland in the men's singles final at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London, Sunday, July 6, 2014.

by the WTA.

At 33 she is the oldest player ever to be named an ITF Singles World Champion.

"This was a year of challenges and triumphs, so to win another Grand Slam and retain my year-end number one ranking is an accomplishment I'm very proud of," she said.

Americans Bob and Mike Bryan were named men's doubles World Champions for the 11th time in 12 years, while Sara Errani and Roberta Vinci of Italy became women's doubles World Champions for the third successive year.

The ITF World Champions will receive their awards at the 2015 ITF World Champions Dinner on Tuesday 2 June, in Paris, during Roland Garros.

FIFA Ethics Investigator Resigns Due to 'Lack of Leadership'



FIFA ethics investigator Michael Garcia

ZURICH (Press TV) - The lawyer tasked with investigations into World Cup corruption claims has resigned over the handling of his findings.

Michael Garcia issued a resignation statement on Wednesday due to "lack of leadership" at the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

The resignation from the FIFA ethics committee came a day after the association presented a 42-page statement out of the 430-page report Garcia had provided after 18 months of investigations into the turbulent bidding process for the

2018 and 2022 World Cups.

"It is the lack of leadership on these issues within FIFA that leads me to conclude that my role in this process is at an end," said the ethics investigator.

FIFA President Sepp Blatter voiced "surprise" at Garcia's decision, saying "the work of the ethics committee will nonetheless continue."

FIFA released a statement in which it appointed an acting chairman for the post.

Russia won the right to host the 2018 World Cup, while Qatar was awarded the 2022 tournament.

Jordan Receives 15,000 Ultra Durable Balls



Jordan receives 15,000 ultra durable balls

AMMAN (AFC) - The Jordan Football Association has received 15,000 ultra durable balls to boost its grassroots football and social development activities thanks to the partnership between the AFC, One World Play Project and the Asian Football Development Project.

Some of the balls will be sent to Zaatar Refugee Camp on the Jordanian border where displaced children and youths will benefit by getting involved in structured football activities, thereby hopefully preventing them from unhealthy activities.

A two-full day event involving more than 1,000 boys and girls aged between five and 15 from urban and rural areas was launched at the Prince Hamzah Hall in Amman on December 15.

The event started with a grassroots football clinic conducted by the Jordan FA Grassroots Department coaches.

Former Real Madrid star and Spanish international Michel Salgado and General Motors West Asia representative Maurice Williams were also at the event and played with the children, who were intrigued by Salgado's magical football skills.

Asian Football Development Project (AFDP) Board Member Hasan Bin Zeid, representing His Royal Highness Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein, officially launched the balls donation.

He thanked the AFC, One World

Play Project (OWPP) and AFDP partnership for donating the ultra durable balls which will benefit grassroots football development and social development in many Asian countries including Jordan.

OWPP Asia Director Stephen Sonderman congratulated the Jordan FA on receiving the balls and hoped they will be useful in many ways to develop football especially at the grassroots level.

Dr. Annathurai Ranganathan, Head of the AFC Social Responsibility Department, said Jordan FA is one the recipients of the excellent ball donation partnership between the AFC, AFDP and OWPP.

He also thanked General Motors for being actively involved in football development by bringing in football ambassadors to motivate children to take part in the beautiful game.

Salgado praised the AFC, AFDP and OWPP for the initiative and hoped that one day Asian countries will dominate football at all levels. He also stated his belief that Asia has a wonderful talent base and just needs more structured development at the grassroots level.

The delegation at the balls donation launch ceremony also visited three schools located in rural areas, namely the Pella School for Boys, Pella School for Girls and Al-Mashare'a School, where football clinics and games were organised with the donated balls.

Barcelona Needs Goals to Keep Pace With Madrid

MADRID (AP) — With Real Madrid still playing at the Club World Cup in Morocco, Barcelona will have a chance to close the gap on the Spanish leaders on Saturday.

Madrid was due to play Sevilla, but the match will be played at a later date because the Champions League winners have reached the Club World Cup final.

Barcelona is still at home, and will have a chance to at least temporarily cut its four-point deficit when it hosts Cordoba.

Here are some things to know about this weekend's matches:

Barcelona has built its attack around Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez, but Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo has singlehandedly outscored the trio 25-24 so far this season.

Barcelona coach Luis Enrique needs to find a way to get more goals, and he could try out some ideas on Saturday against Cordoba.

Athletic Madrid travels north to

Athletic Bilbao with the defending champions looking to rebound after snapping its 27-match home unbeaten streak last week.

Athletic has five wins from its last 10 visits to Bilbao.

With Luis Suarez back and Neymar fit again, 19-year-old Barcelona striker Munir El Haddadi needs to be patient.

El Haddadi scored a goal in his debut with the first team and caught the eye of Spain coach Vicente del Bosque, who selected him for his first senior international outing against Macedonia in a European qualifier.

While Suarez was out, completing a ban imposed during the World Cup, Enrique played El Haddadi in four consecutive matches — three in the Spanish league and one in the Champions League.

Barcelona has since increased his buyout clause to 35 million euros (\$43 million), but with Suarez's return, he has only played



Getafe's Alexis, right, duels for the ball with Barcelona's Lionel Messi during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Getafe and Barcelona, at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez stadium in Madrid, Spain, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014.

in three out of 12 matches.

Villarreal coach Marcelino Garcia Toral has his eye on overtaking Valencia and challenging Sevilla for fourth-place

as his team hosts Deportivo La Coruna.

After securing three points at Atletico, Garcia Toral is looking to keep the momentum going.

Qatar Hires '\$8 Fake Fans' to Fill Empty Stadiums

DOHA (FNA) - Migrant workers in Qatar get one dollar an hour for sitting in the stadiums and pretending to have fun, to applaud and to do the wave, reports said, adding that sometimes they even were asked to dress like Qataris in white robes and headscarves.

"Qatar has a true passion for sports. Everything in our country revolves around sport," Aphrodite Moschoudi, Qatar presenter in 2019 world championships host selection, said in November, RT reported.

However, Qataris do not attend matches so often. A poll published this year by Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics says two-thirds of Qataris surveyed did not attend

any football matches during the previous season, while two-thirds of respondents said fake fans were one of the reasons to keep them away from a stadium.

That is why Qatari officials need someone to fill the empty places in stadiums, according to the Associated Press. 30 Qatari riyals, equivalent to eight American dollars for migrant workers, though, is good money and some of them even enjoy their "work".

"Shaking my body all over ... being in the crowd and shouting and dancing," Adu, a worker from Ghana told the agency. "Being there and getting paid is a plus for me."

Besides, some stadiums are equipped with free WiFi net-

works and workers may send emails to relatives and get news from home.

The sportsmen say it is a "bizarre" situation.

"Bizarre, but we prefer that to playing in front of nobody," French volleyballer Edouard Rowlandson. Officials at FIVB, an international volleyball governing body, said it was news for them.

This is not the first controversial issue concerning 2022 World Cup in Qatar. Earlier this year it was reported that 185 Nepalese workers died in 2013 while building infrastructure for the World Cup and almost 1,000 died since the country was proclaimed the host of championship.

Numerous human rights cam-

paigners denounce the labor conditions currently in the country as being a kind of servitude and say the country's legislation requires an urgent overhaul.

"Qatar is a modern day slave state," International Trade Union Confederation's General Secretary Sharan Burrow told RT.

Qatar uses the Kafala system to govern its domestic migrant workers. The system requires that foreign workers be sponsored by an employer who is responsible for their visa and legal status. Human Rights groups have found evidence that the Kafala system is being manipulated, with employers denying migrants' wages and refusing to grant them an exit visa to leave the country.